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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

February 5, 2004

Applicant: Armin Diez
Title: AT SUBSTANTIALLY METALLIC
CYLINDER HEAD GASKET
Serial No. unknown
Filed: unknown
Attorney docket: HOG610C

Commissioner for Patents
P. O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Dear Sir:

Please amend the above application as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS

1-23. (canceled)

24. (currently amended) Cylinder head gasket with an at least substantially metallic gasket plate comprising at least one sheet metal layer and having several combustion chamber openings, each being surrounded by at least one first bead formed in a sheet metal layer of said gasket plate and having a spring rate so as to be elastically deformable in height, wherein for delimiting the elastic deformation of said first bead at least one delimiting device is associated with each of said first beads, said delimiting device being close to the respective first bead, surrounding the respective combustion chamber opening and being obtained by deformation of a sheet metal layer of said gasket plate such that

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(a) said delimiting device is formed by at least one second bead of said deformed sheet metal layer, said second bead having a spring rate and, in a plan view of said deformed sheet metal layer, surrounding the associated combustion chamber opening at ~~least almost~~ substantially completely and forming over at least part of the length of said second bead an ~~at least almost~~ a substantially complete meander extending in a circumferential direction of said combustion chamber opening;

(b) all around the respective combustion chamber opening the spring rate of the second bead is greater than the spring rate of the associated first bead when measured perpendicularly to said gasket plate;

(c) in plan view of said gasket plate, the second bead is disposed between the associated combustion chamber opening and the associated first bead;

(d) the height of the second bead is selected so as to allow an elastic deformation of the associated first bead; and

(e) in a plan view of the deformed sheet metal layer the total area occupied by the second bead is at least equal to half of the total area occupied by said delimiting device.

25. (canceled)

26. (new) The cylinder head gasket of claim 24 wherein the second bead is obtained by such a deformation of said deformed sheet metal layer that the thickness of a portion of said layer forming the second bead is substantially the same as the thickness of the deformed layer adjacent said second bead.

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27.(new) The cylinder head gasket of claim 24 wherein the height of the second bead is selected such that when the gasket is tightened, the first bead is initially compressed without compression of the second bead.